

## 7. EVIDENCE CONTROL

### STANDARD 7.1

The Washoe County Sheriff's Office (WCSO) DNA Section has and follows a documented evidence control system to ensure the integrity of physical evidence. Evidence and samples from evidence must be collected, received, handled, sampled, and stored so as to maintain the identity, integrity, condition, and security of the item. At all times every item shall be handled in such a fashion as to ensure its integrity, minimize degradation, and maintain its chain of custody.

Testing or re-testing of evidence samples should be conducted to provide the maximum information while consuming the least amount of the sample. When possible a portion of the evidence will be retained for further testing. Unnecessary consumption of the evidence should be avoided.

Refer to the Division Quality Assurance Manual, DNA Procedure Manual, and the CODIS Operating Policy and Procedure Manual for additional information.

- 7.1.1 Extraction tubes and amplification tubes are considered work product and are not evidence. An analyst will retain the remaining DNA extract and/or the post extraction substrate when all raw evidence has been consumed. The extracted DNA is stored in a refrigerator in the DNA pre-amplification room during analysis. Amplified DNA is stored in a refrigerator in the post- amplification room during analysis. Access to these rooms is limited to the Division Director, Supervising Criminalists, Quality Assurance Manager, DNA staff, or individuals escorted by DNA staff.
- 7.1.2 Chain of custody for all evidence shall be documented and maintained. The chain of custody shall include the signature or electronic equivalent of each individual receiving or transferring the evidence along with the corresponding date for each transfer.
- 7.1.3 The WCSO DNA Section has documented procedures designed to minimize loss, contamination, and / or deleterious change of evidence and work product in progress as referenced above.
- 7.1.4 The WCSO DNA Section has secure, controlled access areas for evidence storage and work product in progress.

### STANDARD 7.2

DNA isolated from reference samples and evidence of abundant nature should be discarded at the completion of the examination unless it is being retained for future validation needs. The samples collected (i.e. swabs, cuttings, stains) from evidence submitted in crimes against a person cases may be maintained in the WCSO evidence system for 10 years. If the examiner consumes the raw evidence material, any remaining extracted DNA or post extraction substrate may be retained in the WCSO evidence system for 10 years. When extracted DNA or post extraction substrate is retained in

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the WCSO evidence system, samples from one case must be assigned a unique identifier (typically a P#). This action must be documented in the analyst's notes and report. Samples must be booked into the WCSO evidence system prior to the administrative review of the case package.

When an item of evidence is checked out of WCSO evidence storage, the DNA Criminalist must store the evidence in the Primary Examination Laboratory (Rooms 119/121/123) when not in use. DNA extracts (work product) must be stored in the refrigerator in room 140/140A when not in use. Amplified DNA (work product) must be stored in the refrigerator in room 141 when not in use.

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